



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

An update from your county commissioners

Spring 2006

BOARD OF CLARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Betty Sue Morris
District 1



Marc Boldt, Chair
District 2



Steve Stuart
District 3

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Board of Clark County Commissioners
P.O. Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000

Dear Clark County residents:

There's been a lot of talk recently about annexations and our decision to disband the county's Boundary Review Board. We would like to take this opportunity to talk about that decision and how we view future annexations.

The Board of Clark County Commissioners is elected to serve all the people in Clark County, whether they live in cities or in unincorporated areas. That's why we firmly believe we have a duty to make sure that annexations benefit the entire community.

Annexations can affect the funding county government receives and the regional services we are expected—and required—to provide, such as public safety, public health, and social services. As annexations occur—and they will—one of our top priorities is to make sure that the county and its cities remain financially sound.

Each of the county's cities has its own vision for the future. We recognize that and support the idea that cities need to be able to achieve their goals. We want to work cooperatively with all of the county's cities when it comes to annexations, to benefit from what we've learned in past efforts. It's not about stopping annexations. It's about doing them right.

Everybody gains when we do annexations right. One result of quality annexations is that together the county and its cities will be an economic dynamo. We will come out of these discussions an even stronger community, following a path that takes our county from good to great.

Sincerely,

Marc Boldt, Chair

Steve Stuart

Betty Sue Morris

INSIDE: ■ Fast forward to our future – Three alternatives for Clark County in 2024 ■ One-stop shopping for community health services ■ Fostering citizen participation early ■ Promoting good citizenship

Fast forward to our future

Three alternatives for Clark County in 2024

Clark County is revising its current Comprehensive Growth Management plan so that it allows for a population of about 584,300 in 2024, compared with 391,500 as of April 2005.

As part of that process, detailed studies are under way of lands that may provide space for homes and jobs to meet local needs through 2024. This is a key step in preparing for the public, Planning Commission, and Board of Commissioners to consider a specific proposal for new urban growth areas.

At a work session on March 14, 2006, the Board of Clark County Commissioners directed county staff to proceed with formal studies of potential environmental impacts and capital facility needs (including roads and schools), based on three maps of potential urban areas. You can view maps of the three alternatives by visiting the county Web site at www.clark.wa.gov/longrangeplan/review/index.html. Maps also are available for

review during business hours on the third floor of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., Vancouver.

Alternative 1 is a “No Action” alternative reflecting urban growth boundaries adopted in September 2004 with the new population and employment assumptions identified by the commissioners in 2005.

Alternative 2 is the “2005 Discussion Map” shaped by values, principles, planning assumptions, and growth projections identified by the Board through a series of work sessions in 2005.

Alternative 3 is a “Geographic Flexibility Map,” including land currently classified as “urban reserve,” in addition to city proposals not

included in Alternative 2. The purpose of Alternative 3 is to examine lands that could be used to adjust or refine Alternative 2, to create a formal proposal for public review and hearings.

Please watch for news and announcements about additional opportunities to learn more and comment on potential changes to the county’s land use map.

You also may provide input at any time by sending written comments to:

Board of Clark County

Commissioners

P.O. Box 5000

Vancouver, WA 98666-5000

E-mail: boardcom@clark.wa.gov



www.clark.wa.gov/longrangeplan/review/index.html

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Fostering citizen participation early

From the county morgue to Woodin Creek, from mental health facilities to congested traffic intersections, more

than 60 young people were out in the field on tours as part of the county’s sixth annual Youth Town Hall. They were getting a first-hand look at the complexities and tradeoffs involved in the issues facing our community.

Later in the day they brought their questions, concerns, and ideas with them as they addressed the county commissioners in a wide-ranging town hall discussion on these issues.

Youth Town Hall is just one piece of Clark County’s youth program. It is representative of the importance the county places on hearing the perspectives of our young citizens. More than any of the rest of us, they are likely to be affected by our decisions well into the future.



One-stop shopping for community health services

One-stop shopping has long been popular with consumers and businesses alike. So why not apply the concept to the delivery of community health services? The recently opened Center for Community Health does just that. The \$38 million facility for the first time brings under one roof a variety of services that were formerly provided in scattered locations throughout the county.

The services offered at the center help veterans, people facing substance abuse challenges, low-income residents, people with little or no health insurance, children and infants, new parents, and people facing a variety of physical and mental health issues.

Centralizing the services minimizes the need to travel to multiple locations. Instead, a one-stop-shopping scenario in the new facility might look like this: A man is brought in for substance abuse treatment and evaluated by doctors and counselors. He is recommended for 60 days in residential treatment. During this time he is found to have a variety of health problems. On a different floor, he receives inoculations and various tests. On another floor, he gets referrals for vocational counseling and housing to help him return to the community.

Certainly the convenience that the facility provides is an advantage for the people who need the services. But for taxpayers, there are advantages as well. The new center is expected to be a model of teamwork and efficiency, helping partners to share resources and provide collaborative care. The Clark County Health Department, for example, will have direct access to mental health and substance abuse treatment for its clients. Conversely, individuals served by mental health and substance abuse programs might need health services such as immunizations, clinic exams, maternal care, and child health visits.

Such efficiencies will result in reduced costs that will directly affect the amount of taxpayer dollars needed to fund these services.

The center's new intensive treatment program will result in further cost savings to the community. In the past, when police encountered someone with acute symptoms of mental illness or substance abuse, they had two choices: They could take the person to jail or to a hospital emergency room. Both options are extremely expensive as well as ineffective, often

perpetuating a cycle of crisis treatment or incarceration. The treatment program at the new center avoids these costs while providing long-term solutions.

Service providers refer to the center's innovative service-delivery model as a seamless continuum of care. They believe this approach will contribute to better client outcomes and to an improved quality of life for all Southwest Washington citizens as patients' problems are resolved and they become fully functioning.

The collaboration of partners at the building makes it both unique and a national model for similar programs. Partners include the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Lifeline Connections, Northwest Community Services, Columbia River Mental Health Services, and Clark County's Health and Community Services departments.



Citizens study ideas for road projects

An advisory group called the Transportation Improvement Program Involvement Team is starting to identify projects and set priorities for 2007-2012. Public meetings and open houses will be coming up as the team prepares recommendations to the County Engineer, who will propose a transportation plan for the Board of Clark County Commissioners to consider this fall.

For more information, please contact Susan Wilson at Clark County Public Works, (360) 397-6118 ext. 4330, or visit the Web site at www.clark.wa.gov/tip/index.html.



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Promoting good citizenship

Helping people, not penalizing them. That's what being NICE is about.

Neighbors Invested in Code Enforcement, or NICE, is a new pilot program currently under way in which volunteers work with county staff to respond to complaints about activities that may be in violation of county code. Usually these are nuisance complaints, such as the accumulation of junk or debris or inoperable vehicles, which can affect the quality of life of an entire neighborhood.

After receiving comprehensive training, NICE volunteers working in teams of two will make the first contact with residents, providing them with information and resources to help them understand and comply with county codes. Through community education and outreach, the goal is to provide citizens with an opportunity for voluntary compliance before further Code Enforcement action becomes necessary.

What better way to learn about code requirements and options for compliance than from friendly neighborhood volunteers who share a commitment to improving the county's quality of life? It's definitely a nice approach.



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